

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

September 16, 2008

Last Friday's head-on collision of two trains should never have happened. The victims and families affected deserve and must be given an accurate and complete explanation of what went wrong. Furthermore, it must be made evident to all of us in Southern California that the lessons learned translate into an improved, fail-safe rail traffic management system which can be counted on to avoid future train-to-train collisions, without exception.

As the National Transportation Safety Board, rail operators, and other responsible entities investigate the crash and improve the system, County government must fulfill its duty to lead an evaluation of the disaster response and use lessons learned to strengthen future preparedness.

I was taught the importance of this in 1986 as Mayor of Cerritos. In the aftermath of a disaster, it was found that fire fighters and others who attended to the dead and injured were traumatized by the experience and needed help themselves. This insight gave rise to a new disaster management method—the mental health Critical Incident Debriefing program. It is still in use today and has helped countless first responders to deal with the experience so that they go on in their work of helping others. The evaluation process must begin quickly, while memories and records are still fresh.

- M O R E -

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors instruct:

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MOLINA \_\_\_\_\_

YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

BURKE \_\_\_\_\_

1. The CEO to evaluate the initial disaster response. This report should be written in close cooperation with Los Angeles City management and staff and with the support of County Coroner, Mental Health, and other participating County departments. The report should provide findings, conclusions and recommendations on at least the following subjects: a) Timeliness; b) Speed and effectiveness with which incident command and control was established and maintained; c) Suitability and sufficiency of resources to safely extract and rescue victims; d) Adequacy and effectiveness of communications, including means to respond to concerned family members, press and public. Prior to submission, the report should be reviewed by the Emergency Preparedness Commission for the County and Cities of Los Angeles.
2. County Emergency Medical Services Agency, with oversight and review by the Emergency Medical Services Commission, to provide findings, conclusions and strengthening recommendations on all aspects of the pre-hospital and hospital care response, including on-scene responders, supplies, equipment and communications, the triage and hospital assignment process, suitability and availability of patient transport, and of hospital emergency stations, operating rooms, beds, medical specialists and other patient care personnel.
3. Leaders of these respective evaluations to coordinate their efforts and submit their reports as a single package within 90 days.

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